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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the amendments above and the remarks which follow.

DISPOSITION OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-4, 7-10, and 12-17 are pending in this application. Claims 5, 6, and 11 have been cancelled, and the limitation of cancelled claim 11 has been included in claim 1. Claims 18-32 have been cancelled in view of an earlier restriction requirement. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the lensed fiber includes a coreless fiber formed into a lens, which clarifies that the lens does not have a wave guiding core. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the neck region is contiguous with the convex region and that the neck region is attached to an end of the optical fiber. Claim 8 has been amended to include the definition of thickness of the lens. Claim 16 has been amended to include the definitions of beam waist and thickness of the lens. Claims 14 and 15 have been amended to depend from claim 16. Support for additional limitations in claim 16 can be found in paragraph [0045] of the specification as originally filed.

OBJECTIONS

The Examiner objects to claims 6, 8 and 14-16 because of informalities. The Examiner asserts that it is not clear what the difference is between the thickness of the lens and the radius of curvature of the lens in claims 6 and 8. The Examiner asserts that beam waist of the lens is not defined in claims 14-16. Claim 6 has been cancelled. Claims 8 and 14-16 have been amended as set forth above to include definitions of thickness of the lens and beam waist. Withdrawal of the objection to claims 8 and 14-16 is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

I. Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Russo et al. (U.S. Patent 4,678,268). Claim 5 has been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 5 is moot. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-4, 7, 9, and 14-17 is respectfully requested.

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Russo et al. do not disclose a lensed fiber including "a lens having a tapered neck region contiguous with a convex region," as recited in amended claim 1. Because Russo et al. do not disclose all the limitations of claim 1, Russo et al. cannot anticipate claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 in view of Russo et al. is respectfully requested. Claims 2-4, 7, 9, and 14-17, being dependent from claim 1, are likewise patentable in view of the foregoing arguments.

II. Claims 1, 2, and 9-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Khoe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,721,353). Claim 11 has been cancelled. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 9, 10, and 12-17 is respectfully requested.

Khoe et al. do not disclose a lensed fiber including "a coreless fiber formed into a lens having a tapered neck region contiguous with a convex region," as recited in amended claim 1. In Khoe et al., the lens (3) only has a convex region. Khoe et al. disclose a funnel-shaped part (12) in the tapered portion (11) of an optical fiber (10), which optical fiber is attached to the lens (3), but this funnel-shaped part (12) or tapered portion (11) does not satisfy the limitation of claim 1 because it has a wave guiding core (4). The tapered neck region recited in claim 1 does not have a wave guiding core because the lens, which includes the tapered neck region and the convex region, is formed of a coreless fiber.

Because Khoe et al. do not disclose all the limitations of claim 1, Khoe et al. cannot anticipate claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 in view of Khoe et al. is respectfully requested. Claims 2, 9, 10, and 12-17, being dependent from claim 1, are likewise patentable in view of the foregoing arguments.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 6, 8, 10, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Russo et al. Claim 6 has been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 6 is moot. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 8, 10, 12, and 13 is respectfully requested.

Russo et al. do not teach a lensed fiber including "a lens having a tapered neck region contiguous with a convex region," as recited in claim 1 and discussed above. Claims 8, 10, 12, and 13 inherit this limitation and are also not taught by Russo et al. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8, 10, 12, and 13 over Russo et al. is respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that this paper is fully responsive to the Office Action dated March 22, 2006, and respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Please apply any charges not covered or credits in connection with this filing to Deposit Account No. 03-3325 (ref. SP02-264A).

Respectfully submitted,

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